



Editorial

Dear Readers,

According to the definition on Wikipedia, an editorial is the foreword at the beginning of a magazine. However, in what is likely to be my final editorial as Association Head of Training, I would like to use this opportunity to reflect on my almost twelve years of service on the Board.

Reflecting on my time in office, I would describe it as eventful and, at times, somewhat turbulent, but overall thoroughly enjoyable. Over the course of these nearly twelve years, I have been fortunate enough to have many positive experiences and wonderful moments, and to meet a wide variety of people who all have one thing in common: our shared hobby and our passion for working with our German Shepherds.

However, there have been, and continue to be, the odd hurdle or two to overcome.

The test regulations in place since 2012 ceased to be valid on 1 January 2019, when they were replaced by new FCI test regulations. These brought a relatively large number of changes to the procedures and definitions. Initially, this caused considerable uncertainty among members and required a great deal of explanation.

Once dog sport enthusiasts had familiarised themselves with the content and requirements of the new regulations, they were revised once again on 1 January 2025. This too brought numerous changes, again causing a great deal of uncertainty. In some cases, this uncertainty continues to this day. Added to this, the FCI and VDH repeatedly publish additions and clarifications on the current test regulations and their practical implementation.

We all still remember when Covid dominated our lives, bringing almost every area of dog sport to a standstill. Yet we overcame this difficult phase together, exercising the necessary discipline. Ultimately, we emerged from the crisis stronger than before.

Following two terms of office under the leadership of President Prof. Dr. Heinrich Meßler, there was a change in leadership in our club. Roswitha Danneberg took over as President, naturally bringing her own priorities and approach to running the association.

I also began my term with many ideas and proposals that I believed could improve the overall situation. I successfully implemented some of these during my term of office. However, other proposals failed to secure a majority in the democratic decision-making process and could therefore not be realised.

Overall, the working dog sport sector has experienced positive development, despite the number of tests held and dogs entered declining over the past twelve years.

This decline is naturally directly linked to the negative trend in membership figures, as well as developments in breeding and the number of registered litters.

In performance, both in direct national comparison with other VDH associations and in international comparison with other WUSV associations, SV can look back on an exceptionally successful track record and very positive development.

While we can take a positive view of recent years – particularly in my area of responsibility – it is nevertheless essential that we look primarily to the future. Our shared goal must be to raise the profile of the German Shepherd in the public eye once again, and to make the entire world of working dog sports, with all its many facets, more attractive and interesting for dog lovers and dog sport enthusiasts.

In doing so, we must remain committed to our top priority of providing species-appropriate care and responsible training, particularly in the performance sector, while consistently adhering to animal welfare guidelines. Only by combining high sporting standards, responsible training, and the welfare of dogs can we ensure the long-term positive development of working dog sports.

Wilfried Tautz - Association Head of Training